
FACTSHEET

MOULD AND CONDENSATION

Key guidance

We understand that many of our customers will be concerned about being able to afford to put their heating on.

However, not turning on the heating could create other problems such as mould and condensation.

By following the guidance below, you can help to limit the amount of condensation – and reduce the effects of mould in your home – all year round.

What is condensation?




Condensation is created when warm air comes into contact with cold surfaces, or when there's too much moisture in your home.

It's a more common problem during the colder months and it can be found on or near windows, in the corner of rooms and even in wardrobes or cupboards or behind large items of furniture where air flow is restricted.

The dampness caused by a large amount of condensation can lead to the growth of mould on walls, furniture and other belongings, mildew on fabrics and can even cause wood to rot – including window frames. It can also damage your health.

What causes condensation?

There are three main factors that can cause condensation.

-  **There's too much moisture in the air**
There are lots of everyday activities that can create additional moisture, such as cooking, showering, using a tumble dryer or drying washing indoors.
-  **There's not enough ventilation**
The risk of condensation is increased if the air in your home isn't allowed to circulate freely. Move wardrobes or sofas slightly away from the walls to allow the air to flow. Opening windows for a short period of time can also help ventilate rooms.
-  **It's too cold**
The colder your home is, the more likely you are to get condensation in your home. If you heat one room and leave others cold, it'll make the condensation worse in the unheated rooms. It's much better to have an even temperature throughout your home.

How do I reduce condensation?

We appreciate that extreme cases of damp and mould are harder to manage, and we'd always encourage customers to report these to us so that we can address them.

You can help us by ensuring you do everything you can to help keep your home free from condensation and mould. Please take the following steps to try and prevent the issue becoming a problem.

Keep a consistent, warm temperature

Even when taking steps to ventilate your home, you should also make sure that the temperature is kept consistent and warm. Ideally, the temperature would be between 18–21°C and never below 14°C. It's also more effective to keep a thermostat on at a consistent temperature throughout the day.

This will help reduce costs and condensation more effectively than regularly turning it on and off.

If you're worried about the cost of heating your home, please contact our Money Advisors to see how they might be able to help.

 longhurst-group.org.uk/moneyadvice

Use a hydrometer

Consider buying a cheap hydrometer to put in your house. These measure the humidity level and if you notice it creeping up, you can take action before

mould and condensation becomes an issue. The ideal relative humidity reading for your home is between 30 and 60 per cent.

Ventilate your home

After you've used your kitchen or bathroom, ventilate the room for 15–20 minutes by opening a window or using an extractor fan (if you have one). Always keep the door to the room shut while you do this to prevent the moisture-heavy air from spreading to the rest of your home. In warmer weather, if it's safe to do so, ventilate your bedroom at night by leaving a window slightly ajar or open a window in the morning for half an hour when you get up.

If you have trickle vents fitted to your windows, please use them. These are small vents on the windows that allow air movement inside the property. They are more common in new properties.



Trickle vents allow air to move around a property and can reduce condensation

Dry clothes outside or on a clothes horse

Where possible, please dry any washing outside. If you have to dry clothes inside, please use a clothes horse – not a radiator – and dry clothes next to an open window or in a bathroom with an extractor fan.

Wipe down condensation

If you see condensation gathering on windows or other surfaces, use a dry cloth to wipe it down. Once you've done this, place the cloth outside to dry so that the moisture isn't absorbed back into your home. Also try to open a window for a while to allow excess moisture to escape.

Other simple steps to reduce condensation

- Keep a small gap between large items of furniture and the walls to help air circulate.
- Keep your curtains open during the day to let natural light in – as mould thrives in the dark.
- Consider some indoor house plants that are good at absorbing humidity.
- If you use a tumble dryer, make sure that it ventilates to the outside of your home.
- Always cook with pan lids on and reduce the heat once the water has boiled.
- Always leave a small window open while cooking to allow excess moisture to escape.
- If you have an extractor fan, run it for 10 minutes after a bath or shower.
- Filling your bath with cold water before adding hot will significantly reduce the amount of steam.

How do I remove mould?

You should remove mould as soon as it appears. The good news is that, while mould is unpleasant, if it's tackled early, it can be treated relatively easily.



To remove mould, follow these simple steps:

- Always wear rubber gloves, safety goggles, and a dust mask before cleaning.
- Wipe down the affected area with a fungicidal wash or spray that's been approved by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Always follow the instructions on the bottle very carefully. Please note, chlorine bleach can only kill surface mould and won't destroy its roots.
- After treatment, use fungicidal-resistant paint to help prevent re-growth.
- Don't try to remove mould using a brush or vacuum cleaner.



How do I identify damp?

Condensation won't leave a watermark on surfaces. This is more likely to be damp, which might've been caused by another issue, such as:

- Leaks from windows, roof or guttering.
- Penetrating moisture through walls.



Watermarks on walls and ceilings are caused by damp, not condensation

! If you're concerned that moisture on your walls might be caused by something other than condensation, please call our Repairs Contact Centre on 0800 111 4013.